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ABC NIGHTLINE
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KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline.
Press Secretary): (at press conference) Words can scarcely exp
this horrifying act of violence.

KOPPEL: Tonight, the United States is still waiting for the Sov
why it shot down a Korean jetliner with 269 people on board. On
tonight, we'll talk to a broad range of specialists on internati
Soviet Union, its air defenses, and on international intelligenc
happened, how it happened, and what's likely next.

KOPPEL: If you were watching this broadcast last night, you pro
with the same impression we did: there had been some kind of a
fighter jets and a Korean Air Line 747, but senior U.S. official
and we led you to believe, that the plane had landed safely on Sov...
Sadly, that was not true. The U.S. flag over the White House today, and over all
federal installations and all official U.S. buildings around the world, flies at half
staff. Two hundred sixty-nine passengers and crewmen aboard Korean Air Line's Flight
007 are missing and believed dead. The aircraft was shot down by a Soviet
air-to-missile, air-to-air missile. The United States and South Korean have called
for a special meeting of the U.N. Security Council tomorrow. Tomorrow, also, President
Reagan cuts short his vacation and returns from California to Washington. He'll meet
with his top security advisers and with congressional leaders tomorrow and over the
weekend. From the president to the Congress to the families of those who were on
board the downed jetliner, the reaction today was one of almost sickening shock. Some
found it hard to believe that the Soviets had actually shot down an unarmed plane with
so many passengers on board. Many who spoke of the incident were deeply moved with
pain and with anger.

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KOPPEL: So far, at least, the Soviet government has acknowledged only that an
airliner, an unidentified one, penetrated Soviet air space. They have not admitted
shooting down the plane. Nor have they come close to expressing anything approaching
regret. Joining us now live is the U.S. undersecretary of state for political
affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger. Secretary Eagleburger, what do we know? Are we
confident that the Soviet Union shot that plane down? EAGLEBURGER: Well, I think,
Ted, the facts are absolutely clear. There is no doubt whatsoever, on the basis of
evidence from a number of sources, that the Soviet air force shot down that Korean
Airlines airplane. There's no doubt about that whatsoever.

KOPPEL: Give us, if you can, a thumbnail sketch of, of what happened to the best of
the U.S. government's understanding and in what kind of a timeframe. EAGLEBURGER:
Well, the time frame is, without the facts right in front of me is gonna be a little
bit difficult, Ted.

KOPPEL: Roughly. EAGLEBURGER: But in effect, as the secretary said in his statement
today, there is no question that the Korean Airlines plane was outside of its normal
flight pattern and in fact over-flew Soviet territory. There is also no question
about the fact that that plane was captured by Soviet radar for about two and a half
hours. There were, at one time or another, eight Soviet aircraft up in the air,
either looking for it or in fact later, unfortunately, finding it. There's no
question at all about the fact that one Soviet aircraft, the one that in fact finally
shot the plane, down came to within two kilometers of the Korean aircraft.

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